

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 4 NEW DELHI 3877

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IN
SUBJECT: FURTHER THOUGHTS ON POST-ELECTION SCENE

SUMMARY: ALL RESULTS ARE NOW IN FOR THE "MINI GENERAL ELECTION".

AND GOVERNMENTS HAVE BEEN OR ARE ABOUT TO BE FORMED IN THE FIVE
STATES AND ONE UNION TERRITORY WHICH WENT TO THE POLLS IN LATE
FEBRUARY. THE INITIAL PANIC WITHIN THE CONGRESS (R) FOLLOWING
THE ELECTIONS APPEARS TO HAVE SUBSIDED AND WE DETECT A CERTAIN
STIFFENING OF RESOLVE WITHIN ITS RANKS. DESPITE THEIR COALITION
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IN MAHARASHTRA, THE TWO CONGRESS PARTIES REMAIN SEPARATE ENTITIES.
MANY POTENTIAL DEFECTORS TO MRS. GANDHI'S CONGRESS(I) HAVE BEEN
DETERRED BY HER ARROGANT POSTURE AND THE KNOWLEDGE THAT ENTRY
INTO HER FOLD WILL BE STRICTLY ON HER TERMS. NONETHELESS,
THE BELIEF PERSISTS HERE THAT THE CONGRESS(R)'S LONG TERM VIA-
BILITY AS A SEPARATE PARTY IS AT BEST QUESTIONABLE. MRS.
GANDHI CLEARLY INTENDS TO MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM PRODUCED BY

HER PARTY'S ELECTORAL SUCCESSES BY ENGAGING IN AGITATIONS AGAINST THE JANATA GOVERNMENT. HER POTENTIAL FOR TROUBLE-MAKING IS CONSIDERABLE. HOWEVER, HER ACTUAL POSITION MAY NOT BE AS STRONG AS IS POPULARLY PERCEIVED, AND OBSERVERS WILL BE WATCHING TO SEE WHETHER HER CURRENT SELF-CONFIDENT POSTURE MAY LEAD HER TO OVER-ESTIMATE HER REAL STRENGTH AND COMMIT TACTICAL BLUNDERS. FOR THE JANATA, THE PARTY'S MEDIOCRE SHOWING IN THE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE CAUSED SERIOUS BICKERING WITHIN ITS RANKS. OPINIONS VARY WHETHER THE ELECTORAL OUTCOME WILL PRODUCE A RENEWED SENSE OF PURPOSE WITHIN THE RULING PARTY. COPING WITH MRS. GANDHI'S CHALLENGE IS LIKELY TO OCCUPY JANATA'S TOP COUNCILS IN THE COMING MONTHS. THIS CHALLENGE ITSELF CAN SERVE AS A POTENT CATALYST IN ENHANCING UNITY AMONG THE JANATA'S WRANGLING PARTNERS. END SUMMARY.

1. THIS MESSAGE IS A STATUS REPORT ON THE PRESENT INDIAN POLITICAL SCENE IN THE WAKE OF THE STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS AND CONTAINS FURTHER THOUGHTS ABOUT POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FUTURE.

2. THE SITUATION IN THE STATES: ALL ASSEMBLY CONTESTS HAVE BEEN DECIDED.

(A) IN KARNATAKA. CONGRESS(I) CHIEF MINISTER DEVRAJ URS APPOINTED 18 MINISTERS TO HIS CABINET ON MARCH 8. (URS AND ANOTHER MINISTER HAD BEEN SWORN IN EARLIER.) THE PORTFOLIOS, HOWEVER, CONFIDENTIAL

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HAVE NOT YET BEEN ALLOCATED.

(B) DR. M. CHENNA REDDY WAS SWORN IN AS THE CONGRESS(I) CHIEF MINISTER OF ANDHRA PRADESH ON MARCH 6. HE APPOINTED 21 MINISTERS AND 11 MINISTERS OF STATE TO HIS CABINET ON MARCH 9; THEY WERE SWORN IN ON MARCH 10.

(C) THE SITUATION IN MAHARASHTRA REMAINS CONTENTIOUS. VASANTRAO PATIL (CONGRESS(R)) AND N.K. TIRPUDE (CONGRESS(I)) WERE SWORN IN AS CHIEF MINISTER AND DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER RESPECTIVELY OF THE COALITION GOVERNMENT ON MARCH 7. HOWEVER, DIFFERENCES OVER THE NAMING OF MINISTERS AND THE ALLOCATION OF PORTFOLIOS HAVE DELAYED THE FORMATION OF A GOVERNMENT. THE SITUATION IN BOMBAY HAS BEEN CONFUSED BY CONFLICTING CLAIMS OVER PRECISELY WHAT CONDITIONS THE CONGRESS(R) HAD MET IN JOINING WITH MRS. GANDHI'S PARTY TO FORM THE COALITION. TIRPUDE TOLD THE PRESS IN BOMBAY MARCH 7 THAT THE MAHARASHTRA CONGRESS(R) LEADERS HAD AGREED TO MRS. GANDHI'S TERMS, WHICH INCLUDED RECOGNIZING HER AS THE FINAL ARBITER IN DISPUTES AND POLICY-MAKING. PATIL "REGRETTED" TIRPUDE'S REMARKS, BUT HE NEITHER CONFIRMED NOR DENIED THEIR SUBSTANCE. WE HAVE HEARD FROM ONE SOURCE THAT ALTHOUGH PATIL REFUSED TO SIGN A LETTER COMMITTING HIMSELF TO

MRS. GANDHI'S TERMS (SEE NEW DELHI 3459), HE DID AGREE TO THEM ORALLY. WHATEVER ARE THE FACTS, TIRPUDE'S REMARKS AND THE CONSEQUENT UPROAR THEY PRODUCED IN THE CONGRESS(R) DO NOT AUGUR WELL FOR THE FUTURE COHESION OF THE COALITION PARTNERS. IN ADDITION* THE JANATA IN MAHARASHTRA, DISGRUNTLED OVER LOSING THE MINISTRY-MAKING INITIATIVE TO THE TWO CONGRESSES, MAY SEEK TO DESTABILIZE THE JOINT FRONT GOVERNMENT BY WOING AWAY SEVERAL OF THE INDEPENDENTS UPON WHOM THE JOINT CONGRESS MAJORITY RESTS. (BETWEEN THEM, THE TWO CONGRESSES CONTROL ONLY 131 MLA'S, 14 SHORT OF A MAJORITY.)

(D) IN ASSAM, THE JANATA FELL SHORT OF AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY ON ITS OWN BUT HAS PROCEEDED TO FORM A GOVERNMENT WITH THE AID OF ITS ELECTORAL ALLIES (INCLUDING THE CPM) AND INDEPENDENTS.
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CHIEF MINISTER-DESIGNATE GOLAP BORBORA POSTPONED HIS SWEARIN-IN CEREMONY UNTIL MARCH 12 AND HAS COME TO DELHI, APPARENTLY FOR HELP IN RESOLVING DISPUTES OVER MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIOS.

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(E) THE TWO NON-CONGRESS TRIBAL PARTIES IN MEGHALAYA, THE ALL-PARTY HILL LEADERS CONFERENCE AND THE HILL STATE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY, FINALLY AGREED ON A COALITION GOVERNMENT IN THAT STATE ON MARCH 9, THE CHIEF MINISTER IS EXPECTED TO BE DARWIN DIENGDOH PUGH.

(F) WITH ALL SEATS NOW DECIDED IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH, THE JANATA HAS WON A CLEAR MAJORITY OF 17 OF THE ASSEMBLY'S 30 SEATS. FOUR INDEPENDENTS HAVE ALSO OPTED FOR JANATA, AND FORMER CHIEF MINISTER PREM KHANDU THUNGON UNDOUBTEDLY WILL BE SWORN IN AGAIN.
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3. THE SITUATION AT THE CENTER: THE INITIAL PANIC WITHIN THE CONGRESS(R) APPEARS TO HAVE SUBSIDED FOLLOWING THE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS, AND WE DETECT A CERTAIN STIFFENING OF RESOLVE WITHIN THE RANKS. CONGRESS(R) MP'S AS WELL AS OBSERVERS DO NOT FORESEE ANY SIGNIFICANT DEFECTIONS TO MRS. GANDHI OR THE JANATA, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING. DESPITE THE COALITION IN MAHARASHTRA, THE TWO CONGRESSES REMAIN SEPARATE ENTITIES. PROVISIONAL CONGRESS(R) PRESIDENT SWARAN SINGH HAS BEEN AT PAINS TO EMPHASIZE THAT MAHARASHTRA IS A SPECIAL CASE AND THAT THE COALITION REPRESENTS A "MUTUALITY OF INTERESTS". HE CLAIMED THAT THE CONGRESS(R) WOULD RETAIN ITS SEPARATE IDENTITY AND DISCOUNTED SPECULATION THAT THE MAHARASHTRA ARRANGEMENT WOULD PAVE THE WAY FOR A REUNIFICATION OF THE TWO CONGRESSES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER SWARAN SINGH WILL CONTINUE PERMANENTLY AS CONGRESS(R) CHIEF, BUT IT IS APPARENT THAT THE PARTY IS MOVING FORWARD TO REBUILD ITS ORGANIZATION AFTER MRS. GANDHI'S EXIT: SEVERAL VANCNCIES WERE FILLED ON THE WORKING COMMITTEE ON MARCH 9, AND MOHAMMED SHAFI QURESHI WAS APPOINTED AS A GENERAL SECRETARY, REPLACING V.B. RAJU, WHO EARLIER RESIGNED. SEVERAL CONGRESS(R) MP'S TELL US THAT THE PARTY PLAFS TO HOLD NEW ORGANIZATIONAL ELECTIONS IN COMING MONTHS; THEY CITE THIS AS EVIDENCE OF THE CONGRESS(R)'S RESOLVE TO CONTINUE AS A SEPARATE PARTY. FOR ITS PART, MRS. GANDHI'S CONGRESS(I) IS ALSO SETTING ITS HOUSE IN ORDER. MEETING IN DELHI MARCH 9, ITS WORKING COMMITTEE NAMED SEVERAL OFFICE-BEARERS. CONGRESS(I) MP'S ALSO CONFIRMED THE NOMINATIONS OF KAMALAPATI TRIPATHI AFD C.M. STEPHEN AS PARLIAMENTARY PARTY LEADERS IN THE RAJYA SABHA AND LOK SABHW RESPECTIVELY.

4. KONFUSION PERSISTS OVER THE PREKISE BREAKDOWN OF MP'S BETWEEN THE TWO CONGRESSES IN PARLIAMENT. ACCORDING TO THE LATEST FIGURES FROM THE RAJYA SABHA SECRETARIAT, CONGRESS(R) REMAINS CONFIDENTIAL

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THE LARGEST SINGLE PARTY IN THE UPPER HOUSE WITH 72 MEMBERS, FOLLOWED BY THE CONGRESS(I) WITH 61. SUCH FIGURES ARE NOT AVAILABLE FOR THE LOK SABHA, HOWEVER. CONGRESS(I) PARLIAMENTARY PARTY LEADER C.M. STEPHEN ASSERTED THAT MORE THAN 50 LOK SABHA MP'S HAVE PLEDGED THEIR LOYALTY TO MRS. GANDHI'S PARTY. ON THIS BASIS, THE SPEAKER ON MARCH 9 OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED THE CONGRESS(I) AS A SEPARATE POLITICAL PARTY IN THE LOWER HOUSE. THUS FAR, HOWEVER, STEPHEN HAS DECLINED TO RELEASE A LIST OF HIS MP'S. BASED ON THEIR LATEST HEAD COUNT, CONGRESS(R) SOURCES CLAIM THAT THEY RETAIN THE SUPPORT OF ABOUT 80 MP'S AND BELIEVE THAT MOST OF THESE WILL HOLD FIRM, THUS MAINTAINING THE CONGRESS(R) AS THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION IN THE LOK SABHA. THEY CONCEDE THAT FURTHER DEFECTIONS TO THE CONGRESS(I) MAY OCCUR IN THE RAJYA SABHA, PARTICULARLY AMONG CONGRESS(R) MP'S FROM KARNATAKA AND ANDHRA WHO ARE ANXIOUS TO BE RE-ELECTED IN NEXT MONTH'S ROUND OF BIENNIAL ELECTIONS. (RAJYA SABHA MEMBERS ARE ELECTED BY STATE ASSEMBLIES.)

5. THE LONGER-TERM FUTURE OF THE CONGRESS(R): IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THE EROSION OF CONGRESS(R) STRENGTH IN PARLIAMENT HAS BEEN FAR LESS THAN EXPECTED IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF THE ASSEMBLY ELEKTIONS. THUS FAR, LEADING FIGURES IN THE PARTY (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF FORMER WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER S.S. RAY) HAVE HELD FIRM IN RESISTING A RECONCILIATION WITH MRS. GANDHI, AND THE MAJORITY OF MP'S APPARENTLY HAVE LINED UP BEHIND THEM. MANY HAVE ADOPTED A WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE. THERE ARE SEVERAL IMPORTANT FACTORS WHICH HAVE TENDED TO DETER POTENTIAL DEFECTORS TO MRS. GANDHI'S CAMP. FOREMOST IS MRS. GANDHI HERSELF. HER TOUGH, ARROGANT REMARKS AT HER MARCH 1 PRESS CONFERECE SERVED NOTICE THAT ENTRY INTO HER FOLD WILL BE STRICTLY ON HER TERMS AND THAT SHE INTENDS TO PICK AND CHOOSE AMONG THOSE SEEKING ENTRY. (OBSERVERS HERE AGREE THAT HER SELF-CONFIDENT STANCE WAS A TACTICAL BLUNDER ON HER PART. A MORE CONCILIATORY APPROACH TO DEFECTORS COULD HAVE PROMPTED MANY FENCE-SITTERS TO JUMP QUICKLY.) ANOTHER DETERRENT MAY BE THE BELIEF THAT MRS. GANDHI NEVER TRUSTS PEOPLE WHO HAVE OPPOSED HER AT ONE POINT. CONFIDENTIAL

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CONGRESS(R) MP'S MAY REALIZE THAT SHOULD THEY JUMP TO HER CAMP, THEY WILL ALWAYS BE VIEWED WITH SUSPICION AND WOULD EVENTUALLY BE CUT DOWN BY THE FORMER PM. IN ADDITION, MANY MP'S SEEM

PSYCHOLOGICALLY UNABLE TO RECONCILE THEMSELVES TO MRS. GANDHI AND HER AUTHORITATIAN WAYS AND MAY PREFER POLITICAL OBLIVION TO HAVING TO SUBMIT TO MRS. GANDHI'S YOKE. THEY VIEW THE CONTINUING PRESENCE OF THE OLD DISCREDITED EMERGENCY "CAUCUS" AROUND HER AS A SIGN THAT SHE HAS NOT CHANGED HER WAYS.

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6. DESPITE THESE DETERRENTS, THE BELIEF PERSISTS HERE THAT THE CONGRESS(R)'S VIABILITY AS A SEPARATE PARTY IN THE LONG RUN IS AT BEST QUESTIONABLE. IT IS SEVERELY SHORT OF MONEY. EXCEPT FOR THE COALITIONS IN KERALA AND MAHARASHTRA THE PARTY IS NOWHERE IN POWER IN THE STATES AND THUS LACKS THE POWERFUL LEVERS OF PATRONAGE TRADITIONALLY VITAL TO INDIAN POLITICS. MOST IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, THE CONGRESS(R) LACKS NATIONALLY-RECOGNIZED, CHARISMATIC LEADERS OF MRS. GANDHI'S STATURE. CONGRESS(R) MP'S TELL US THAT THE PARTY WILL SEEK TO EXPLLIT THE SAME ISSUES AND POPULAR GRIEVANCES AS MRS. GANDHI IN ITS EFFORTS TO

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REBUILD ITS IMAGE AND OPPOSE THE JANATA. THEY GLUMLY CONCEDE, HOWEVER, THAT IN ANY SUCH COMPETITION WITH CONGRESS(I) THEY WILL BE AT A SEVERE DISADVANTAGE. SOME FEAR THAT IN ORDER TO COMPETE WITH MRS. GANDHI, THEY MAY BE FORCED TO DESCEND TO HER LEVEL OF STREET-LEVEL AGITATIONS AND RABBLE-ROUSING, WHICH MANY FIND UNSAVORY. YET, A MORE "RESPONSIBLE AND REASONED" APPROACH BY THE CONGRESS(R) COULD FAIL TO WIN THE MASS POPULAR SUPPORT WHICH IT SEEKS AND WOULD MAKE THE PARTY THE OBJECT OF MRS. GANDHI'S CONTEMPTUOUS SCORN.

7. THERE IS ALSO THE BELIEF AMONG OBSERVERS THAT MANY CONGRESS(R) FIGURES, ESPECIALLY AT THE LOWER LEVELS, LACK THE POLITICAL WILL TO STICK IT OUT ALONE. PARTY RANK AND FILE MAY BE ATTRACTED BY MRS. GANDHI'S ACKNOWLEDGED CHARISMATIC APPEAL, THE CONVICTION THAT ONLY SHE CAN BRING THE PARTY BACK TO POWER AND THE BELIEF THAT SHE HAS EXTENSIVE FINANCIAL RESOURCES. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, MANY MAY GRADUALLY DRIFT TO HER CAMP. THEIR LEADERS AT THE NATIONAL AND STATE LEVEL, SEEING THEIR HOME BASES ERODING, MAY EVENTUALLY BE OBLIGED TO GO ALONG. A CASE IN POINT IS MAHARASHTRA. IF IT IS TRUE THAT THE STATE CONGRESS(R) LEADERSHIP VIRTUALLY SURRENDERED TO MRS. GANDHI'S TERMS IN THEIR FRANTIC EFFORTS TO RETAIN POWER, THE PRECEDENT COULD BE ESTABLISHED FOR OTHER STATE-LEVEL CONGRESS(R) UNITS TO DO LIKEWISE IN RESPONSE TO MRS. GANDHI'S BLANDISHMENTS.

8. MRS. GANDHI'S NEXT MOVES: IT IS NOW EVIDENT THAT THE FORMER PM INTENDS TO MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM AND THE IMAGE PRODUCED BY HER ELECTORAL SUCCESSES BY ENGAGING IN AGITATIONS AGAINST THE JANATA GOVERNMENT. HER PARTY'S NATIONAL EXECUTIVE ANNOUNCED ON MARCH 9 THAT THE CONGRESS(I) WILL "HIGHLIGHT" POPULAR GRIEVANCES BY HOLDING PUBLIC RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS AND STREET CORNER MEETINGS. AS PART OF MRS. GANDHI'S EFFORT TO REBUILD HER IMAGE IN HER HOME STATE, SHE IS EXPECTED TO TAKE UP THE CAUSE

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OF CANE GROWERS IN U.P.; WHO HAVE BEEN HIT BY FALLING PRICES FOR SUGAR CANE. IN ADDITION, SHE MAY SEEK TO EXPLOIT THE GRIEVANCES OF DOCTORS AND TEACHERS IN U.P. WE UNDERSTAND THAT SHE PLANS TO TEST HER APPEAL IN THE NORTH BY HOLDING A MASS RALLY IN DELHI NEXT MONTH. OTHER ISSUES ON WHICH SHE MAY ORGANIZE DEMONSTRATIONS ARE RISING PRICES, LAW AND ORDER, "ATROCITIES" ON HARIJANS, AND UNEMPLOYMENT. OBSERVERS HERE AGREE THAT MRS. GANDHI'S POTENTIAL FOR MAKING TROUBLE IS CONSIDERABLE AND THAT HER ULTIMATE AIM MAY BE TO CREATE A CHAOTIC SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY SIMILAR TO

THAT WHICH PREVAILED IN 1974-75.

9. STILL, MRS. GANDHI'S ACTUAL POSITION MAY NOT BE AS STRONG AS IS POPULARLY PERCEIVED FOLLOWING HER ELECTORAL SUCCESSES. THERE IS A WIDESPREAD BELIEF, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT SHE WILL NOT DOMINATE THE TWO SOUTHERN STATES WHICH HER PARTY WON. SHE WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH TWO STRONG-WILLED, WELL-ENTRENCHED CHIEF MINISTERS IN ANDHRA AND KARNATAKA WHO ARE KNOWN TO BE OF INDEPENDENT MIND. THEY MAY NOT MEEKLY SUBMIT TO HER DICTATES, PARTICULARLY IF SUCH ACTIONS WOULD LEAD TO A CONFRONTATION WITH THE CENTER. DEVRAJ URS ALREADY HAS GIVEN SOME INDICATIONS OF HIS INDEPENDENCE. IT WAS REPORTEDLY ON HIS INSISTENCE, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT MRS. GANDHI RETREATED FROM HER DEMAND OF A WRITTEN COMMITMENT FROM THE MAHARASHTRA KONGRESS(R) LEADERSHIP. HIS PUBLIC REMARKS HAVE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT HE WISHES TO DISTANCE HIMSELF FROM THE FORMER PM. MRS. GANDHI'S WRIT MAY NOT LOOM LARGE IN MAHARASHTRA. HER CONGRESS(I) LEGISLATORS MAY BE MORE ANXIOUS TO PRESERVE THE COALITION THAN TO FOLLOW DICTATES FROM HER WHICH COULD ENDANGER IT. INDEED, JUDGING FROM HER ARROGANT REMARKS AT HER PRESS CONFERENCE, MRS. GANDHI COULD CONCEIVABLY SUCCUMB TO THE HUBRIS OF BELIEVING SHE IS STILL THE PRIME MINISTER. OBSERVERS HERE WILL WATCH CAREFULLY TO SEE WHETHER HER SELF-CONFIDENT POSTURE MAY LEAD TO HER OVER-ESTIMATING HER REAL STRENGTH AND COMMITTING TACTICAL BLUNDERS.

10. IN THE SHORT TERM, MRS. GANDHI MAY HOPE THAT HER OFFEFSIVE AGAINST THE JANATA WILL STALL THE COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY AND
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OTHER CASES NOW BEING PROCESSED AGAINST HER. IN HER CAMPAIGNING, SHE CLAIMED THAT THE SHAH COMMISSION WAS IRRELEVANT AND SHE WILL PRESUMABLY POINT TO HER PARTY'S SUCCESSES IN THE SOUTH AS EVIDENCE THAT THE AVERAGE VOTER CARES LITTLE FOR LEGAL WRANGLINGS IN DELHI. BUT THE JANATA LEADERSHIP (PARTICULARLY SUCH ANTI-INDIRA FIGURES AS HOME MINISTER CHARAN SINGH AND INDUSTRIES MINISTER FERNANDES) IS NOT LIKELY TO BOW BEFORE SUCH PRESSURE TACTICS, AND THE INQUIRIES ARE LIKELY TO CONTINUE

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THEIR COURSE. HOWEVER, MRS. GANDHI'S AGITATIONAL APPROACH COULD
INTIMIDATE WITNESSES BEFORE THE COMMISSIONS AND DETER THEM
FROM PRODUCING DAMAGING EVIDENCE AGAINST HER.

11. THE JANATA: THE JANATA'S MEDIOCRE SHOWING IN THE ASSEMBLY
POLL DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE HAD A MAJOR IMPACT ON THE PARTY
THUS FAR. INTERNAL BICKERING OVER PLACING RESPONSIBILITY FOR
THE SETBACK IN THE SOUTH HAS BEEN RELATIVELY LOW KEY.
JANATA PRESIDENT CHANDRA SHEKHAR'S REMARK THAT THE PERFORMANCE
WAS DUE TO LACK OF PROGRESS BY THE JANATA IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD
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HAS BEEN WIDELY REPORTED AND RESENTED IN CERTAIN RULING PARTY
CIRCLES. ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER CHANDRA SHEKHAR EVEN-
TUALLY MAY BE EASED OUT OF THE PARTY PRESIDENCY, EVIDENCE
SUGGESTS THAT THE JANATA IS PULLING ITSELF TOGETHER. INDEED,
SOME JANATA MP'S TELL US THAT THE ELECTION RESULTS WILL HELP THE
RULING PARTY. THEY INTEND TO CITE OUTCOME TO THEIR LEADERSHIP
AS EVIDENCE THAT THE PARTY MUST NOW "DELIVER THE GOODS" IF
IT WISHES TO BE RETURNED TO POWER IN THE NEXT ELECTIONS. IN
ADDITION, THE RECORD OF THE PAST YEAR SUGGESTS THAT THE CHALLENGE
OF MRS. GANDHI CAN ITSELF SERVE AS A POTENT CATALYST IN ENHANCING
COHESIVENESS AMONG ALL OF THE JANATA'S WRANGLING PARTNERS.

12. HOWEVER, PROSPECTS FOR JANATA UNITY HAVE NOT BEEN IMPROVED BY A POLICY BATTLE RECENTLY LAUNCHED BY THE POWERFUL HOME MINISTER, CHARAN SINGH. DESPITE MRS. GANDHI'S EMERGEFCE, OR PERHAPS BECAUSE OF IT, CHARAN SINGH HAS CHALLENGED THE JANATA LEADERSHIP ON SIXTH PLAN ALLOCATIONS AND IS CALLING FOR LARGER INPUTS FOR THE RURAL SECTOR AND SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRY. THIS DEBATE AT THE SENIOR LEVEL OF THE GOVERNMENT AND PARTY HAS ALREADY PRODUCED A THREAT OF RESIGNATION BY CHARAN SINGH, WHOSE RELATIONS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER WERE ALREADY STRAINED.)

13. ONE RESULT OF THE ELEKTIONS WE HAVE NOTICED IS THAT SPECULATION OF A "REALIGNMENT OF POLITICAL FORCES" AFFEKTING THE JANATA HAS SUBSIDED. A LARGE-SCALE INFLUX OF CONGRESSMEN INTO THE RULING PARTY WOULD HAVE REARRANGED THE BALANCE OF FORCES WITHIN IT IN FAVOR OF THE FORMER CONGRESS ELEMENTS AND COULD HAVE SHARPENED THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEM AND THE JANA SANGH/BLD GROUP. BUT THIS INFLUX HAS NOT OCCURRED AND, GIVEN THE APPARENT STIFFENING WITHIN CONGRESS(R), MAY NOT OCCUR FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. THE STATUS QUO WITHIN THE RULING PARTY AND BETWEEN IT AND THE TWO CONGRESSES MAY THUS PREVAIL. ANOTHER FAKTOR WHICH COULD MAINTAIN THE STATUS QUO WITHIN THE JANATA IS THAT THE PARTY'S CONFIDENTIAL

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POOR PERFORMANCE IN THE SOUTH DEMONSTRATED THAT THE PRESENCE OF OLD CONGRESS ELEMENTS (BE THEY CONGRESS(O) CFD OR REKEFT DEFECTORS) DID NOT MATERIALLY HELP THE JANATA. BY FAILING TO MAKE AN IMPRESSIVE SHOWING, THESE CONGRESS ELEMENTS NOW CANNOT CLAIM THAT THE BALANCE HAS SHIFTED IN THEIR FAVOR WITHIN THE PARTY.

14. SUMMING UP: OBSERVERS WILL CONCENTRATE ON HOW THE JANATA RESPONDS TO THE AFTERMATH OF THE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS. A PERIOD OF INTROSPECTION IS LIKELY, BUT OPINIONS VARY WHETHER THIS WILL PRODUCE A RENEWED SENSE OF PURPOSE WITHIN THE RULING PARTY TO GET ON WITH THE BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT. DIRECTION MUST OBVIOUSLY COME FROM THE TOP, BUT THERE SEEMS TO BE SOME DESPAIR WITHIN THE PARTY OVER THE PRIME MINISTER'S ABILITY TO DO ANYTHING MORE THAN MERELY PRESIDE OVER A FACTION-RIDDEN GOVERNMENT. COPING WITH MRS. GANDHI'S CHALLENGE WILL OCCUPY JANATA'S TOP COUNCILS IN COMING MONTHS, AND PARTY LEADERS ARE TRYING TO DETERMINE HER NEXT MOVES AND DEVISE STRATEGIES TO BLOCK THEM. ONE CABINET MINISTER SUGGESTED TOUS, HOWEVER, THAT DESAI HIMSELF SEEMED UNCONCERNED BY THE CHALLENGE AND THAT HE FELT NO GREATER SENSE OF URGENCY AS A RESULT OF MRS. GANDHI'S GAINS
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780109-0817
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780379/aaaacooi.tel
Line Count: 542
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7dc618c9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 10
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3360979
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FURTHER THOUGHTS ON POST-ELECTION SCENE SUMMARY: ALL RESULTS ARE NOW IN FOR THE \"MINI GENERAL ELECTION\".
AND GOVERNMENTS HAVE BEEN OR ARE ABOUT TO B E FORME
TAGS: PINT, IN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7dc618c9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014